

Preface: The Plan of Nashville

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The Plan of Nashville is a vision. It is also a process in which members of Nashville's design community and the community at large volunteered many hours to collaborate on a vision for their city. This book is the physical manifestation of their ideas and efforts.

The Plan is produced by the Nashville Civic Design Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to elevating the quality of Nashville's built environment and promoting public participation in the creation of a more beautiful and functional city for all. Working with government officials, regional planning groups, neighborhood organizations, businesses and residents, the Center leads community discussions and workshops and conducts research to further understanding of the relationship between a society and its built environment. The Design Center is not a regulatory institution. Rather, the Center advocates and supports the highest standards for contemporary community design.

A partnership of the University of Tennessee, Vanderbilt University, the Metropolitan Development and Housing Authority, the government of Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County and the private sector, the Civic Design Center was established in December 2000 and opened its doors in June 2001. The Center does not charge for its assistance, nor replicate the work of existing government agencies, nor provide services that compete with design professionals. The Design Center is an outgrowth of the Nashville Urban Design Forum, founded in 1995 to present monthly public discussions of urban design issues. The Center's Board of Directors, as well as its sponsors, represent a cross-section of Nashville and Davidson County's professions and perspectives.

While the majority of the Center's resources are directed toward working with individuals, neighborhoods, and organizations that apply for its assistance, the Design Center also initiates independent research aimed at developing a collective vision for the city. The center's first Design Director, Mark Schimmenti, an architecture and planning professor with the University of Tennessee's College of Architecture and Design, urged the Board of Directors to consider a project to bring together many levels of the Nashville community—from design

professionals to neighbors—to capture and document their collective vision for downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. The Board agreed, and the project came to be known as the Plan of Nashville.

The Plan was initiated in 2002 under the leadership of Seab Tuck then president of the Center's Board. Subsequent Board presidents Jeff Ockerman and David Minnigan have provided additional leadership and support for the project. Seab has continued to serve as the Board's liaison with the Plan, facilitating and coordinating what became a very ambitious and complex effort. Both a cheerleader and a task master, he has been one of the most important driving forces behind this project.

The process for developing the Plan of Nashville was initially sponsored by the Frist and Memorial Foundations. These foundations have been steadfast in their support of the Design Center; without them we could not have conducted the many meetings and community workshops that served to capture and document the collective vision.

Of all the individuals who came together to make the Plan a reality, it is imperative that we acknowledge first the staff of the Nashville Civic Design Center: Design Director Mark Schimmenti; Associate Design Director Gary Gaston; design interns Andrea Gaffney and Raven Hardison; and interns Blythe Bailey, Chris Barber, Brian Bobel, Michelle Bowen, Matthew T. Champion, Brian Christens, Daniel Cooper, Ellen Dill, Matt Gregg, Jason Hill, Margaret Martin Holleman, Ben Palmquist, Amanda Posch, Astrid Schoonhoven, and Nekya Young. Each faced serious challenges, crushing deadlines, major frustrations and tedious tasks with diligence and dedication. And although executive director John Houghton departed midway, his initial philosophical and organizational guidance of the Plan had impact throughout the process. Finally, Gary Gaston, in particular, is to be commended for his dedication, discipline and hard work. He saw the process through to its conclusion—the publication of this book—and contributed greatly to the final product.

We very much appreciate the role that Mayor Bill Purcell played in establishing the Design Center, and for the continuing support he has provided to the Center and the Plan, as well as the emphasis he has placed on the importance of the neighborhood, an emphasis Center and Plan also endorse. With the Mayor's blessing, Metro government staff members Randal Hutcheson, David Koellein, and Judy Steele made major contributions to the process and publication of the Plan. Randy in particular, with his arduous research into the history of planning in Nashville, served as one of the backbones of this book.

The University of Tennessee's College of Architecture and Design, under deans Marleen Davis and Jan Simek, has supplied faculty and students who have served as a major resource for this Plan.

Throughout the project, the Design Center engaged many volunteers who gave their time, energy and professional expertise to develop the Plan. Too numerous to list here, they are all specifically recognized in the section that delineates the process for the Plan of Nashville.

Upon completion of all the community meetings and the consolidation of historical research, we began preparing to shape the results into a publication. We knew that there was only one person, Christine Kreyling, who had the knowledge and skills to take the mountains of information and opinions, maps and diagrams, and produce a text that would prove valuable to the professional as well as the interested Nashvillian. We thank her for doing a remarkable job.

Many of the ideas presented in this book are supported by statements written by local and national experts in planning and design; we thank them for their willingness to share their words and ideas.

The illustrations in this book were produced in large part by the Design Center staff. But we must also applaud the graphic work of Ken Henley, Corey Little, Frank Orr and Susan Barbera for making this a more beautiful and visually compelling Plan. Special thanks also go to Omari Green, a student at the Nashville School of the Arts, who provided graphic assistance at each and every workshop.

Vanderbilt University has supported the Design Center from its inception; the institution's role in the Plan of Nashville book has been equally unfaltering. Vice Chancellor Mike Schoenfeld offered the talents of Vanderbilt Creative Services in the persons of Vice Chancellor Judy Orr and graphic designer Deborah Brewington, copy editor Donna Smith, and photographers Neil Brake and Daniel Dubois. Likewise, our publisher and guide through the book process was Michael Ames, Director of Vanderbilt University Press.

When we were ready to print, Steve and Judy Turner, Joe Barker and Tuck Hinton Architects generously supplied the funds to assure that the Plan would find its way into the hands of many.

We have tried to acknowledge the broad base of citizen support for the Plan of Nashville by listing participants on the endpapers of this book. If a name is missing or misspelled, it is because we were unable to decipher a signature on a sign-in sheet; for this we apologize.

There are a number of organizations and individuals who deserve special mention. The Nashville Downtown Partnership, under Steve Gibson and later Tom Turner, organized and paid for more than one activity that supported the Plan. The Adventure Science Center, Armistead Barkley Inc., Holy Name Church, the Magness Potter Center, the Metro Development and Housing Agency, the Metro Parks & Recreation Department, the Metro Planning Department, the Nashville Convention Center, the Nashville Cultural Arts Project, the State of Tennessee, and the Vanderbilt University School of Law all donated space for the community meetings.

Colleagues who assisted with research include Ann Roberts and her staff at the Metro Historical Commission, as well as the staffs of the Nashville Room of the Nashville Public Library, Metro Archives, the Tennessee State Library and Archives and the Tennessee State Museum. Sandra Duncan and the staff of the Metro Arts Commission ensured that public art forms a vital component of the Plan. At an early stage in this publication, Christine Kreyling sought and received editorial advice from Don Doyle, John Egerton and Harvey Sperling. The book's review committee--Rick Bernhardt, Marleen Davis, Kim Hawkins, and Seab Tuck--also provided valuable organizational suggestions. Former Metro planning director of Robert Paslay supplied unique historical insights. Keel Hunt advised on implementation. Jeanne Stevens and Bob Murphy were available for consultation on transportation issues. None of these individuals are responsible for the content of this book--nor for any inadvertent errors--but they all helped to deepen the level of knowledge contained within these pages.

In closing, the Plan of Nashville is dedicated to the memory of Martin Roberts. Martin loved the built environment and truly worked for the betterment of our community through that belief. As a founding Board member of the Nashville Civic Design Center he was an adamant supporter of the Plan of Nashville and of utilizing a community-based process to arrive at a unified vision.

Unfortunately Martin did not live long enough to hold this book in his hands or to see what the vision would be. But his example gave all involved the strength of mind and love of Nashville to persist in their best work. It is to Martin Roberts that we dedicate this Vision.

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